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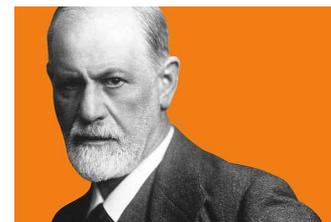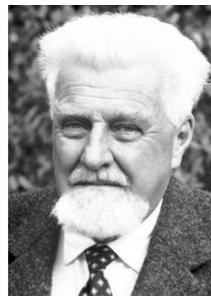
Cyber Aggression & Cyberbullying: Widening the Net

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- Human aggression -
" ... any behaviour directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate (immediate) <u>intent to cause harm</u>"

(Anderson & Bushman 2002, p. 28).

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- Stephen Minton (2016) highlights the importance of 'distance' (physical, social) - we may be more inclined to carry out aggressive actions against others when we are distant from them.

  - Physical distance

  - Social distance

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Cyberbullying defined

- 'Cyberbullying' - internet harassment / online aggression / online bullying /electronic aggression (Dooley et al. 2009; Kowalski et al. 2008; Smith 2009; Tokunaga 2010)

- It is through the lens of traditional bullying that cyberbullying is understood, but with a unique venue (Dooley et al. 2009)

- Cyberbullying encounters similar problems to traditional bullying, as across languages and countries.

- Criteria - Power imbalance, Repetition, Intent to harm

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Cyberbullying defined

- Grigg (2010) - cyber aggression is a more inclusive term

- "Cyber aggression refers to any behaviour enacted through the use of information and communication technologies that is intended to harm another person(s) that the target person(s) wants to avoid..."
(Corcoran, Mc Guckin & Prentice, 2015, pp. 252-253)

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- Cyber aggression varies in terms of motivation and provocation, including <u>hostile</u>, proactive, direct and indirect aggression.

Forms of cyber aggression

1. Cyberbullying (or peer-to-peer cyber aggression)

2. Cyber stalking – new phenomenon or extension of traditional stalking? (Foellmi et al. 2012)

3. Trolling - " ... behave in a deceptive, or destructive manner in a social setting on the Internet with no apparent instrumental purpose" (Buckels et al. 2014, p. 97).
   1. messages which seem to come from a place of sincerity;
   2. messages designed to predict outwardly negative reactions;
   3. messages designed to waste time by provoking a futile argument (Herring et al., 2002)

- An issue of classification?

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Prevention / intervention

- Mc Guckin and Corcoran (2016) list criteria for evaluation of programmes:

- There is a well-worn path in terms of countering traditional bullying – e.g., the whole school approach.
  - Recognises that there is an important social context to bullying. The cyber world similarly has a social context

- Cyberbullying / cyber aggression present new and somewhat unique challenges

- There are ongoing and novel approaches to countering cyberbullying and cyber aggression.

- We must be sensitive to uniqueness of human beings in terms of situational and personal factors. A one size fits all approach simply will not do

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Concluding points

- Causes of aggression are many and varied.
  - Minton raises some important contextual aspects of cyberspace

- 'Cyber aggression' may be an appropriate widening of the net

- There is great variety of peer-directed aggressive behaviours – e.g., cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and cybertrolling.

- Interventions which focus on cyberbullying specifically are varied - education, counselling, prevention, prosecution or legislative or policy reform.

- Ultimately, we must approach cyber aggression with a broad perspective theoretically, conceptually, and in terms of prevention and intervention.

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